2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
AN50 Badaga AN50



the houses. On that occasion some Badagas also do *pu:ja* to bring blessings upon agricultural implements and even school books.

Ka:rttige is followed by the month of Ma:rgaźi (December–January), the most inauspicious month of the Dravidian calendar. Some Badagas have now adopted the Tamilian practice of daily *pu:ja* throughout the month. Early each morning a group of men goes along every village street singing *bajan* songs about Shiva and Vishnu. Before this daily tour the women clean the houses, put auspicious markings on the ground outside their doorways and leave the doors open with a lamp burning inside until the *bajan* group has passed by. The many villages which have adopted this ritual conclude the unlucky month with a big communal feast.

In short, we find that there is some local variation in the form taken by the borrowed memorial ceremonies and festivals. They are not celebrated by all Badagas and those who do so show less enthusiasm for them than for native Badaga festivals. Furthermore, Badagas are much less enthusiastic about them than are the Tamilians and Kanarese now living in the Nilgiris.

## GROWTH OF LINGAYAT TIES WITH MYSORE

Before the twentieth century those Badagas who were Lingayats were mostly illiterate and knew little about their religion as it was practised in the Mysore homeland. Perhaps once or twice a year a Lingayat *guru* would wander up into the Nilgiris from nearby Angala or Nanjangud, selling *lingas* and performing family ceremonies (Harkness, 1832, 137); whatever he taught about the Lingayat faith would have been transmitted by word of mouth. In this century, in contrast, Badaga Lingayats are literate, and some are avid readers of books on Lingayat philosophy. Cheap bus transport has also enabled them to visit the Nanjangud temple and other places of pilgrimage easily and so to meet well-informed monks and priests in the towns of Mysore State.

One significant fruit of this increased contact has been a number of marriages between Badaga Lingayat men and Kanarese Lingayat girls; even a few of the conservative Wodeas have taken this step. However, the move for marital ties with Mysore has not found ready acceptance among most Badaga Lingayats, even though Kanarese brides usually bring a substantial dowry with them. For several decades this matter has been the subject

2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
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attitudes sufficiently to become Christians now prompt people to alter other orientations not allied to religious values but rather to a secular government and its new ranking of employment and educational priorities. Such a change in orientation holds out the chance of upward mobility, but in that process conversion to Christianity has become an anachronistic mechanism.

## NEW PATTERNS OF COMMUNICATION

The idea of communication embraces the physical facilities of road and rail transport, postal and telegraph services, as well as the mass media of radio, film and newspaper, and the channels for communication between individuals within a local setting. We shall review briefly how these have changed in recent decades.

### *Transportation*

Steady improvements in transport have helped the production and sale of cash crops. In the last century all goods had to be carried up or down the Nilgiri escarpment by coolies, on horseback or in bullock carts.[10] Faced with such restrictions Badagas were unable to export produce to other parts of India (Grigg, 1880, 480). Then in 1899 a railway was completed from Coimbatore to Coonoor (a remarkable engineering achievement), and by 1908 it reached to Ootacamund. Its construction involved Badaga contractors and labourers, giving some their first experience of earning regular wages. When the 1914–1918 War began there was thus a quick means of exporting vegetables to all parts of India and even beyond.

During the years between the two wars trucks became common in the district, and roads were improved to accommodate them. A few Badagas who became middlemen bought lorries to improve their business. At the same time a bus service began, and in the years since World War II the network of bus routes has become so complex that there is now scarcely any Badaga village more than five kilometres from a bus route leading to a town. Seventy routes are travelled within the district, some by several competing companies.[11]

### *The Impact of Towns*

The availability of such a profusion of buses has helped the

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Badagas in more matters than marketing. They are now able to go to town frequently—typically once a week—and their children can attend high school or even college without losing much contact with the home. (Ootacamund has two colleges and Coonoor another, all three affiliated with Madras University.) Literacy and newspapers in Tamil have spread, too, in part because of the easy transportation system. The literacy rate is now seemingly higher in the rural Nilgiri Plateau than in Madras City: in 1963, 78% of adult Badaga males and 52% of females were literate, while in 1961 70% of Madras City males and 48% of females were literate.[12] Even old Badagas are often quite familiar with daily news stories, weather forecasts and even some political predictions (cf. Hockings, 1965 a, *passim*).

The cheap railway and bus services have made visits to the great pilgrimage centres of South India possible for thousands: the famous temples at Cape Comorin, Madurai, Palni, Tirupati and Tanjore now receive Badagas almost daily. Nor must we overlook the business trip: increasingly farmers as well as traders find it worth visiting cities when they have a harvest to sell or bulk supplies to purchase.

The modern cities and great pilgrimage centres can have two different types of psychological effect: a city shows the Badaga visitor profusions of consumer goods, among them new household devices, radios, watches, bicycles and cameras, as well as interesting foods, cloths and ornaments; the pilgrimage centre, on the other hand, stresses ties with the mythical past of South India, with the gods represented in the temples, with priestly authority and with the grand history of the temples themselves. It is an important distinction: the man who goes to a distant temple may come home with his attention focussed on the past and on separation of the self from worldly matters, whereas the man coming from a business trip may be full of a desire to buy some implement he has seen or try out a new skill or save money so that his son may attend college in the city.[13] This distinction between the conservative and the modernizing effects of travel is to some extent paralleled in the choice between mythical and modern film themes or between religious and secular magazines. Not all contact with the cities necessarily introduces people to modern ways of life; not all who patronize radio, films or periodicals are drinking at a source of non-traditional knowledge, for though the media may be modern the villager discriminates in what he derives from them.

2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
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9. See above, pp. 166, 168. On the designation of Badagas as a caste, see Hockings, 1968 b, *passim*.

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10. Ward, 1821, lxv; see above, p. 142. Until 1878 the mails were carried by teams of runners; Grigg, 1880, 408.

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11. The district is unusually well endowed in this respect, for it is only the size of Warwickshire or Luxemburg and slightly smaller than Rhode Island State. From Ootacamund some of the major cities of South India are also served: Madurai, Salem, Mysore, Bangalore, Coimbatore, Palghat and Calicut (Kozhikode).

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12. India, 1962, 133; Moses, 1964, 33, found 73% of Badaga males and 50% of females literate ($N = 200$). My sample in 1963 was 420.

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13. There are a few who combine the business trip with a pilgrimage, but this is not usual.

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14. This purposive sample was drawn from 656 interviews in the district.

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15. $Chi^2 = 5.18$, $P < 0.03$. This middle-aged group had grown up during the slump which spanned the 1930s and which is reflected in the low food-grain prices of those years; see Madras, 1965, 37.

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16. *manetana*, literally 'house-stage' or 'house-level'; compare Kannada *manetana*, translated as 'household,' 'race, family' by Kittel, 1894, 1207, the connotation being a family of worthy people.

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17. Grigg, 1880, 366. These were village magistrates and clerks; see above, p. 172.

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18. These social distinctions have over a century of history. They are crystallized in various proverbs as well as being universally recognized normative concepts. One proverb, for example, runs: 'Though it is hot water it will extinguish fire.' This refers to group loyalties: though we may have a friendship with a man of another lineage, village, faction, phratry or community, we will take the side of our own group against his when the need arises. Other proverbs relate to particular social distinctions, e.g., between one village and another:

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'Even if he is headman of his own village, he is not superior to the son of the widow of the last house in another village.'

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'If you are not cunning, do not go to Jakkatala; if you are poor, do not go to Ke:ti.'

E.g., between phratries.

'If a crow makes a dropping on you it is a bad sign; if a Ha:ruva shouts at you it is a bad sign.'

E.g., between affines and agnates:

'If brothers curse each other, one can still build his house on his brother's threshold; if in-laws curse, leave and run away.'

'Though she is our sister, is her husband ours?' (In a later work I plan to analyse some 1300 Badaga proverbs).

[p. 238 is blank]

489 up or down the Nilgiri escarpment by hand, on horseback, or on bullock carts (Ward 1821: lxv). With such a restriction it was impossible for Badagas to export fresh vegetables to other parts of India, even had they been interested in doing so (Grigg 1880: 480).

In 1899 a railway was completed from Coimbatore to Coonoor, and by 1913 it reached as far as Ootacamund. Its construction involved Badaga contractors and Badaga laborers, giving to many their first experience of earning cash by working. When the 1914-1918 War began there was thus a quick and easy means of exporting fresh vegetables to all parts of India, and even beyond.

During the years between the two wars trucks became a common phenomenon in the District, and roads were improved to accommodate them. Some of the Badagas who became middlemen purchased trucks to improve their business.

At this time a local bus service also began. In the years since World War II the network of bus routes has become so complex that there is no longer a Badaga hamlet anywhere which is more than three miles from a bus route leading to one of the towns. 57 different routes are now traveled within the Nilgiris District, some by several competing companies.

The existence of buses in such profusion has helped the Badagas in more matters than marketing. They are now able to go to town frequently — typically once a week -- and thus their children can attend high school and even college without having to lose their close contact with the home. Literacy and newspapers have spread, too, with the help of the easy transportation system. Literacy today is quite as high in the rural population of the Nilgiris as it is in Madras City, according to a survey which I conducted: in 1963, 77.8% of Badaga males, and 51.8% of females, were literate; whereas in 1961 69.6% of Madras City males, and 48.2%

212 of females, were literate (India 1962: 133). Even old Badagas are often familiar with daily news stories, with weather forecasts and political predictions.

177 517 (484) (494) One of the most important benefits of the bus system, at least in the eyes of the Badagas, is that it permits frequent trips to the movie houses. Film-going is an important event in the lives of most Badaga families today; what they see has a great impact on them; and in nearly every family there is at least one film-goer. Some of the most popular films are dramatizations of Indian history or of the epic stories. These are presented in such a way that they reinforce traditional ideas about Hinduism and the nature of the universe. But equally popular are the films about "modern" life, about social problems such as divorce, widow remarriage, "love" marriages and intercaste marriages; dramas which are presented against a background of affluence that is a new experience to the villager. These "modern" themes extol urban life, untraditional marriage practices, and the desirability of owning such luxury goods as cameras, watches, radios, mechanical toys and sports cars. The impact of these films is already clear: younger Badagas yearn for watches, cars, cameras and all the other paraphernalia that they have come to associate with modern urban life. A sample of 301 Badaga males in 1963 gave this information about their film-going habits:

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Frequency:

| | |
|---|---|
| Never go | 17.6% |
| Rarely go | 23.9% |
| Once a month | 19.3% |
| Once a week | 19.3% |
| More than once a week | 1.7% |
| (Not ascertained) | 18.3% |

231 caused some rearers of livestock to start keeping compost pits. In
654 each hamlet or village there is usually a grassy clearing or raised
368 platform where male representatives meet and Badagas gather to chit-
chat. A large tree (often a Ficus sp.) may shade this meeting place.
312 Some Badaga women still must fetch water from nearby springs or
streams, but many Badaga hamlets and villages now have water piped to
368 faucets set near house-rows. A burial-cremation center is within easy
walking distance from each Badaga community. Most Badaga communities
491 have roads running to or through them, and a fair number of these
363 roads are asphalted. Scheduled buses run over some roads, and a few
494 Badagas now drive individually or jointly owned cars, buses, station
493 wagons, and trucks.

Houses. Prior to 1840 the Badagas lived in a house type with
175 front porches and two rooms separated by a wall with a door. A small
342 front door led into one room, and there was a fireplace in the other
(354) darker room. Thatched roofs were supported by posts, and walls made
(824) with bamboos or reeds woven between the posts were then daubed. How-
(333) ever, some houses had clay and stone walls (Harkness 1832: 36; Birch
1838: 103; Hough 1829: 89). According to data obtained by Jagor
342 (1876: 193-194), each thatched clay and stone house in an examined
house-row had an entranceway leading on the right to a front room.
This room had a right side storage platform and a mortar built into
the floor on the left. From the front room a door led to a bathroom
extending the full width of the house, and another door led to a
(354) kitchen paralleling the front room. The fireplace for cooking was